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ABSTRACT

The author examines the field of guidance which he feels needs to become part of the school curriculum in order to achieve its objectives. This would be best accomplished by expanding the historical defintiion of curriculum to include: 1) knowledge in addition to, and other than, that provided by the disciplines; and 2) opportunities for the student to develop intelligence about his own unique self. The author sees the career education movement as providing a good opportunity for this development and feels that career education concerns can accommodate activities and purposes which are central to the fulfillment of the objectives of guidance. Career education must not be simply equated with education about jobs or with vocational-technical skill training; rather, it must be regarded as a way of constructing the process of schooling, not merely its outcome. (Author/SES)

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GUIDANCE AND THE PROCESS OF SCHOOLING: CONSIDERATIONS OF CURRICULUM AND CAREER EDUCATION

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GUIDANCE AND THE PROCESS OF SCHOOLING: CONSIDERATIONS OF CURRICULUM AND CAREER EDUCATION

I begin with the question: What is education? Or better: What is schooling?

Higher education has unduly constricted the shapes and forms and the substance of lower forms of schooling. We proceed as though the primary task of schooling is instruction in the disciplines. We do this presumably to acquaint students with a body of knowledge which we feel, or at least once felt, will help us to live a better, fuller life. In essence, we offer the distilled, drained experience of the past in such a way that the personal dimension is completely extracted and, consequently, ignored. The self is so drained out of codified knowledge that we even forget that our knowledge was created by human beings, and created on certain premises and definitions.

We then offer this knowledge about the world and about generalized selves to the student. We help him to develop his intelligence about the world, and about people in general. Or perhaps, more accurately, we merely offer him intelligence, and see to what extent he can "grasp it".

What is not valid presently for consideration in schools is the experiential world of the individual student. The instructor is primarily interested in the individial self to the extent that it helps him to shape his instruction in a way that maximizes the opportunity for learning to occur.

Such a conception of schooling is unnecessarily constraining and its consequences need to be confronted.

The redefinition I recommend must go in two directions. We must

1. expand the notion of what is worth knowing to include knowledge in addition to that of the disciplines.
2. offer the student opportunity to develop intelligence about his own personal, idiosyncratic self.

Both of these suggestions, in effect, have implications for a redefinition of curriculum and make it possible for Guidance to become part of the curriculum. I am, in effect, talking about a guidance curriculum--a set of organized learning experiencesthat will give a student opportunity to develop intelligence about his self, his personal, unique, idiosyncratic individual self.

Note well that I am not talking about instruction or teaching. Note equally well that I have not talked about a cognitive and affective split in which cognitive becomes associated with intelligence about one's world and affective is linked with the personal.

Rather I am talking about the self as a unity with both cognitive and affective aspects.

Note further that I am not talking about a split between subject matter and caring for kids, where teachers are responsible for subject matter and guidance people care for kids.

Rather I am saying that other subjects besides the disciplines do matter and that, in certain circumstances that are both legitimate and appropriate, the subject matter is the individual self of the student.

In schools, under competent and knowledgeable supervision, students must be given the opportunity to come to grips with themselves, with the self that they are indeed creating by the very processes and premises they use in giving definition to their own experience.

The processes and structure of schooling as they now exist serve to

create and develop certain kinds of people. By changing these fundamental processes and structures of schooling, we can create opportunity for a different kind of person to develop. And no one could be more appropriately suited to that task than those in Guidance and, by Guidance, I mean all those specialists in education whose knowledge base is the behavioral and social sciences, those sciences that study people as persons living in groups in communities.

Though in the past Guidance has been swept along by rapid shifts in stress and emphasis and responded to the immediacy of pressures and demands, that situation need not continue. Were guidance to set its own sails, it could then take advantage of what is current and immediate.

As, for example, the Commissioner of the United States Office of Education, Sidney P. Marland, Jr., has made Career Education a number one priority. Career Guidance has been established as an aspect of high priority within the focus of Career Education.

Guidance could and should be in the vanguard of establishing career education as the focus of all education, and should work to prevent career education from simply becoming opposed to academic education. To distinguish those students who will go on to college from those who will go immediately to work would be to compound the errors of the past. For the notion of career as developed by my co-presenter David V. Tiedeman, Donald E. Super, and others in Guidance is based on the premise of the human career--not career as simply a family of related occupations. The issue is not how one organizes the world of work but rather how one organizes work in relation to his developing self.

It is focus on the development of a person, and it is the way in which a person defines his relation to work and schooling that defines his career. Were we to simply oppose college-bound to work-bound and introduce only

some youngsters--those academically not capable, for instance--to considerations of career, we would be continuing the constraining definitions of the past and not measurably increasing the freedom of youngsters. Schooling would still be other-oriented, only now on jobs instead of colleges.

The tragedy of this thinking is that we have forgotten that schooling exists primarily to educate a citizenry that wishes to govern itself, and that wants to remove whatever constraints impinge on the maximum development of the human person. We wish to free our young from the constraints of ignorance. In all this, the person ought to be central. Yet we know that he is not. The individual should learn that he can create his own career, that he can put together a life for himself from a host of possible alternative ways of behaving, thinking, and, feeling, and that he has a major hand in what he becomes. We can only increase that freedom by offering him opportunity to think about himself and his circumstance.

We must struggle--and struggle it is--against those forces which wish to have schooling focus on some disembodied intellect, on intellect shorn of person and situation. To return to my initial premise, a view of Guidance that centers on development of intelligence about self and, as such, introduces knowledge which is experience-oriented rather than discipline-oriented would welcome and profit from efforts to make career education a central concern in schooling. For whether you go to work or to college or into the military after high school, you are still building a career. And youth who go on to college must still one day face the considerations of work and its place in their life. We are all too familiar with students who find themselves in college and wonder not only what they are doing there, but how they got there.

Career education is not simply to be equated with education about jobs, with vocational-technical skill training, or with special populations, like minority groups. Though education about careers is part of career education, career education is not education about careers per se. Career education is a way of construing the process of schooling, not its outcomes. Again, career education ought to be concerned with efforts to provide opportunity for a student to consider the kind of person he wants to become, to consider that he is confronted with a world of choice and decision regarding the place of work and of school in his life, and that his every choice determines in part the development of his life.

It again seems singularly appropriate for those in Guidance to be in the forefront of efforts to make Career Education and Career Guidance a reality, that is, the kind of reality that will effect the lives of students in ways that has meaning for them and increases their freedoms. In this instance, however, Guidance can capitalize on what is of immediate concern to achieve its objectives, rather than simply being swept along.

In summary, Guidance--in order to achieve its objectives--needs to get into the curriculum, to become part of the curriculum.

This is best accomplished by expanding the historical definition of curriculum to include:

1. knowledge in addition to, and other than, that provided by the disciplines.
2. opportunities for the student to develop intelligence about his own unique self.

The Career Education movement provides a good opportunity for this development. Career Education concerns can accommodate activities and purposes which are central to the fulfillment of the objectives of guidance.